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LEXICOGRAPHY. HISTORY OF ENGLISH, PART ONE. LANGUAGE CURRICULUM III, STUDENT VERSION.

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AN OUTLINE OF THE NEED FOR AND USES OF LEXICOGRAPHY AND A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, PART 1, WERE COMBINED IN THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS. THE FIRST SECTION, THE OUTLINE ON LEXICOGRAPHY, GAVE A BRIEF HISTORY OF DICTIONARY COMPILATION AND DESCRIBED THE NEED FOR DICTIONARIES AND THEIR USES. WAYS WERE SUGGESTED FOR STUDENTS TO COMPILE THEIR OWN WORD-NOTEBOOKS OR ABBREVIATED DICTIONARY LISTS SO THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTY AND SKILLS REQUIRED FOR DEFINING NEW TERMS, EXPANDING OR LIMITING DEFINITIONS TO MEET CHANGING USAGES, AND ANALYZING PATTERNS OF DEFINITION. THE GUIDE'S SECOND SECTION COMMENTED ON THE HISTORY AND CHANGES OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. EXAMPLES FROM WRITINGS OF GOEFFREY CHAUCER, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WERE GIVEN. THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH OF SHAKESPEARE EXEMPLIFIED IN "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE" WAS COMPARED TO AND CONTRASTED WITH TODAY'S MODERN ENGLISH, COMPARING VOCABULARY, WORD LOSSES, SHIFTS IN MEANING, AND GRAMMAR FORMS. SHAKESPEAREAN ENGLISH WAS CHOSEN FOR STUDY BECAUSE OF SHAKESPEARE'S WIDESPREAD AND ENDURING POPULARITY, THE COMPARATIVE EASE OF READING BY A MODERN AUDIENCE, AND THE STANDARDIZATION IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE THAT OCCURRED IN LONDON IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY. VARIOUS STUDENT EXERCISES THAT COMBINE LEXICOGRAPHY WITH STUDIES OF LITERATURE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WERE SUGGESTED THROUGHOUT THE GUIDE. PART 2 IS ED 010 824. RELATED REPORTS ARE ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160 AND ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832. (FM)

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LEXICOGRAPHY.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH, Part One.

Language Curriculum III,
Student Version.

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

LEXICOGRAPHY (THE MAKING OF DICTIONARIES)

Language Curriculum III

Student Version

LESSON 1. THE NEED FOR ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

The Growing Use of English

For some 600 million people throughout the world, English is the Language in which many decisions affecting their lives are made. Over 350 million of these speak it; about 100,000 as a second tongue.

English enables northern Nigerians to talk with their countrymen in the south. In Ghana it is also the language of national unity. So varied are the languages in these new countries that government business could not be carried on without the use of English.

In the Middle East and Asia, excluding the Soviet Union, English is the principal language of natural science and technology. A scientific study cannot be translated into Arabic, Urdu, Yoruba, or any of the other mother tongues of Africa and the East. So students who want to know what is going on in the world learn English.

Of course, all of these people speak English with the accents of their mother tongues. But because of the growing need for English skills in the emergent nations, thousands of students much like yourselves are trying to learn English.

In what countries do most of those who have native command of the language live? In what countries do you suppose English is one of the secondary languages? What effect is this widespread use of English having, especially on the vocabulary and grammar of English?

The Growing Stock of English Words

Of course, no one of these millions of users of English has control of more than a small percentage of the 650,000 words in our continually expanding language. In fact, no modern dictionary attempts to list all known English word forms and their meanings.

How many of this growing stock of words does your dictionary list?

Probably not more than 140,000--about the total number of words in use over 350 years ago in Elizabethan England. Very few of the five million Englishmen then speaking English could write it, or chose to write English even if they could. Most educated Elizabethans preferred to write Latin or Greek, French or Italian--anything but homespun English.

One glorious exception was William Shakespeare. As a schoolboy, he probably studied Latin and Greek, but he chose to write in his native tongue. In his plays he used over 25,000 words, some of which he coined on the spot. What percentage of the words available to him did he use?

Young Shakespeare had to learn the language much as you do today --by listening, by reading, by continually experimenting with it himself. But unlike you, when he heard or read a new word, he had to guess at its meaning through its use. He had no English dictionary or grammar to which he could turn. Reading widely and listening attentively to the word-play among English common people and courtiers, he remembered words and learned how men used them to convey many different kinds of meanings. He, in turn, put these words back into circulation in his plays. Perhaps more than any other person he has helped English-speaking people to understand and appreciate their language.

Thinking and Writing about Shakespeare's English

1. Each of the phrases listed below has been drawn from Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice (the Folger Library General Reader's edition).

   a. How many of them can you understand without the help of a standard dictionary?

   b. What does this tell you about growth and change in language?

2. Note especially the underlined part of each phrase. With the help of the editor's notes in your copy of The Merchant and your standard dictionary, determine,

   a. which words have disappeared from the language

   b. which words have acquired new meanings

   c. which words have changed in form but have retained the same meanings

Page	Speaker	Phrase
1	Antonio	In sooth, I know not. . . .
1	Salerio	Where your argosies with sail. . .
1	Salerio	The pageant of the sea. . .
6	Bassanio	What follows is pure innocence. . .
7	Portia	Good sentences and well pronounced
9	Portia	He is a proper man's picture. . .
13	Shylock	But soft!
31	Gratiano	This is the penthouse. . .
33	Lorenzo	In the lovely garnish of a boy. . .

Page	Speaker	Phrase
38	Salerio	Slubber not business for my sake. . .
43	Solanio	Let me say amen betimes
44	Solanio	It is the complexion of them all to leave. . .
58	Shylock	. . .that you are so fond as to come abroad with. . .
59	Antonio	. . .with bootless prayers
62	Portia	. . .like a fine bragging youth and tell quaint lies
63	Launcelot	We were Christians enow before. . .
71	Gratiano	. . .from the gallows did his fell soul fleet
77	Portia	or the division of the twentieth part of one poor scruple
85	Launcelot	There's a post come for my master. . .
86	Portia	So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

3. On the basis of this evidence what kinds of statements can you make about the changes in forms and meanings of these Elizabethan words during the past 350 years?

After discussing this question in class, write a paragraph in which you point out some of the kinds of changes in the form and meaning of words that a modern reader of Shakespeare must watch for.

Explaining English to English Speakers

The notion of explaining a person's native language to him was a new one when Shakespeare was a schoolboy. Of course educated Englishmen had studied Latin and Greek and often Spanish and Italian and French, but supposedly every Englishman knew his own language. It was used for daily conversation and business dealings, some literary forms like plays and ballads and lyric poetry and, of course, sermons.

Like most schoolboys of his day, Shakespeare probably made use of different kinds of foreign language dictionaries--listings of Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, and French words with their English equivalents. But he did not study English grammar or vocabulary building.

Elizabethan schoolboys, like schoolboys everywhere, could use their language but did not always understand it, especially its "hard" words. For centuries the language had been steadily growing and changing. Many different kinds of words had filtered into the language from other countries. Some words were French in origin; others were Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Welsh, Spanish, or Italian. Ministers and schoolmasters were using these "hard" words in written form. Printers were beginning to publish words in English, and an increasing number of English people were trying to learn to read.

In 1582 Shakespeare was 18. In that year a schoolmaster named Richard Mulcaster wrote about the need for an English dictionary. This is what he wrote (his English has been modernized for your convenience):

(For text, see The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson, 1604-1755, by DeWitt T. Starnes and Gertrude Noyes; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946; p. 11 beginning with "It would be a very. . ." and ending with ". . .language well themselves.")

Mulcaster was not concerned about foreign speakers of English. In fact during Queen Elizabeth's reign few foreigners had any reason for learning English. Can you think why this was so? Mulcaster did, however, list 8,000 "hard" words with which he thought English readers needed help, but he left the task of defining them to others.

First to respond to Mulcaster's challenge was Robert Cawdrey. In his Table Alphabeticall of Hard Words, he listed and defined 2,500 "hard" words. It was printed in 1604, just a few months before Shakespeare's company performed The Merchant of Venice at the court of James I.

The success of Cawdrey's Table encouraged others to interpret similar sets of "hard" words. Some of these early dictionary-makers also tried to fix the spelling as well as the meaning of a few thousand

selected English words, since there were then often several possible ways of spelling the same word.

Such were the little English dictionaries and spelling books our forefathers brought with them to the New World during the 1600's and the early 1700's. These little word books helped students learn how to read and write, but they gave no indication of the continual change in the growing English language. No one yet had enough knowledge about the language to make the kind of dictionary you have today.

Thinking about the Need for English Dictionaries

1. According to Mulcaster,
   a. What kind of person was qualified to compile the first English dictionary?

   b. What classes of words should be defined?

   c. What kinds of explanation should the dictionary-maker provide?

   d. How did English speakers acquire command of their native language? Of foreign languages? Which method did Mulcaster think was superior?

   e. Having access to an English dictionary would solve what problem? Do you think Mulcaster was over-optimistic about the value of a dictionary to a native speaker?

2. a. To what extent does your dictionary fulfill the requirements set out by Mulcaster?

   b. What other kinds of information does it also provide?

3. Write a paragraph or two in which you develop either of these topics, or a similar one:

   a. How I use an English dictionary

   b. How I use a foreign language dictionary

Qualified Word Watchers

Now that English has become an international language, no one has a monopoly on it. Wherever it is being used, it is expanding and changing to suit the needs of those who speak and write it.

Anyone can be a word watcher. Anyone can coin a word, write a book, or make a dictionary. Even you. Few people do, of course. We look to experts for knowledge of and advice about our changing language.

Who are these experts? Some are scholars and teachers, editors and judges. They comment on language directly and often tell us what

to do about it. Others comment on language through their use of it. Writers like Shakespeare and Twain and Hemingway and speakers like Lincoln and Churchill and Kennedy fall into this second class. Together both groups tell us a great deal about our language and set standards for our use of it.

But only the dictionary-makers, the people who make a business of watching most, if not all, of the words of the language, have charted the changing course of the language in an orderly and objective way. Most modern dictionary makers (or "lexicographers") are expert word-watchers. They track down changes in forms, pronunciations, and meanings of words. They catalog their findings, make decisions about them, and publish their decisions in the form of dictionaries. We buy and use the dictionaries for pleasure and profit.

Dictionaries are becoming increasingly expensive to make because the task of the dictionary-maker becomes greater as the number of English words and the rate of change increase. Is it any wonder, then, that any lexicographer's report on the state of the language is always several years behind actual usage? Thus you can often discover new developments in the language before a trained lexicographer has time to track them down, catalog them, and add them to a dictionary.

Thinking and Talking about Word-Watching

1. a. Why do we need qualified English word-watchers?

   b. Is your local newspaper editor a qualified word watcher?

   c. Name at least two other classes of people who watch words.

   d. In what areas are you qualified to watch words?

2. a. What is the main difference between the scope and purpose of a dictionary and those of an encyclopedia?

   b. Which do you use more often?

3. a. Try to discover who compiled the dictionary you commonly use. Reading the title page and preface will help you answer this question. Do not confuse the name of the publisher with that of the general editor or compiler.

   b. How many staff members helped to make your dictionary? How many of them are mentioned by name? What do these answers tell you about the nature of their task? How many would you classify as lexicographers?

   c. When was your dictionary published? How long did the editorial staff work on it?

4. The editor of your dictionary probably tells you the kinds of words he has included and the kinds of words he has purposely omitted. Comment on both kinds and give examples, if you can.

Starting a Word Collection of Your Own

Starting a collection of words as Mulcaster did can be fun. Making a wordbook--even a modest one like Cawdrey's--is another matter. You can, however, learn much from either undertaking. It will give you a new appreciation of your standard dictionary while making you aware of the gaps in it. It will make you look at words rather than through or around them. It will help you remember the form or spelling of words. And it will give you valuable practice in rethinking and reducing to written form the meanings of some of the words you think you understand.

Making a dictionary calls for knowledge as well as work. First you must determine its scope and purpose. Will it simply be a personal reminder of the spelling and general meanings of key words you find hard to remember in your study of science or transformational grammar? Or will it set out for others the meanings of key terms in fields about which you know a great deal such as ice-hockey or puppetry or ballet dancing?

You cannot start collecting words until you have made a tentative decision about your purpose and the area of language within which you are going to work. These decisions raise other questions. How will you track down words? Where are you most likely to find them? In textbooks? In discussions with parents, teachers, and friends? On television or the radio? Will you collect only nouns, verbs, and adjectives?

The wise collector tries to collect more than he needs. He also tries to get illustrative phrases and sentences from letters, printed articles, and books of formal and informal speech.

After you capture the word or phrase, how do you cage and tame it? Most word collectors use 3 x 5 slips of paper or cards bound together with an elastic band or a paper clip. They put only one word or phrase on a card along with its use and meaning. In this way they can keep adding to their collection and change or discard an entry without disturbing the rest of their work.

Are you ready to begin?

Determining the Scope of Your Wordbook

1. For which of the following proposed wordbooks are you qualified to collect entries?

   a. Acronyms in the News (NASA)

   b. Ballet for Beginners (ballerina)

   c. Baseball for Peewees and Parents (three-bagger)

   d. Collection of Wild Flowers (cat's paw, Kalmiopsis)

   e. Ditty Bag of Sea Terms (topside, scuttlebutt)

f. Indian Place Names (Multnomah, Winchuck)

g. Lexicon of Trade Names (Kodak, Crest)

h. Notes for Musicians (scale, fortissimo)

i. Passwords for Photographers (light meter, composition)

j. Portfolio of Artists' Terms (pigments, palette knife)

k. Primer of Modern Missiles (Atlas, Minuteman)

l. Sewing Sampler (hem, tuck)

m. Terms for Space Travellers (light years, spaceship)

n. Table of Firearms (derringer, pepperbox)

o. Who's Who in Literature (Johnny Armstrong, Shylock)

p. Words for Woodsmen: Loggers and Foresters (widow-maker, whistle punk)

Your teacher may assign you to work with one or more classmates in making one of these wordbooks or a similar one. After you and your teammates have decided on the purpose and scope of your proposed wordbook, collect at least three sample entries each. Discuss these with your teammates, your teacher, or the class in general before you begin collecting words in earnest. In this way you can develop standards for judging the kinds of words you are looking for. You will also learn to be discriminating in your choices. Do not make the mistake of collecting too many words at one time.

Discovering a Rule for Writing Formal Definitions

Before you try to define some of the words you have been collecting for your wordbook, you need to understand how to make a formal definition; that is, a carefully planned definition.

We often define things informally by giving examples. In response to a small child's question, "What is a kitty?" you would probably point to a lively ball of fur and say, "This is a kitty." Definition by examples helps the listener see or visualize for himself the object defined. He is, in fact, often simply learning the name of a class of things in the world.

But often we do not have things to point to. Then we must construct formal definitions. They are language devices that attempt to make clear how an unknown thing is related to a larger and known class of things.

"A hoop is a special kind of ring or a circle," we can say when we don't have a hoop to point to. But unless the listener can visualize the shape of a ring or a circle, our definition is not enlightening. That

is, we can define by pointing to things but we cannot formulate definitions of English words for people who do not already understand the meaning of a good many English words. We define a word by substituting other words for it.

The kinds of word we substitute make all the difference. An informal definition, "A kitten is a baby cat," may be meaningful to a small child. The definition, "A kitten is an animal," might not, because the child may not yet know what animal stands for. Moreover, it is too general to be helpful.

The meaning of the word animal probably dawned on you slowly as you began to see that kittens and puppies of all sizes and breeds and pigs and horses have characteristics in common that at once make them similar to each other in a general way and quite unlike other things called plants. This ability to group things according to certain characteristics they share is one we develop slowly and often without knowing it. Without this ability we cannot think--or define; that is, we cannot put the new things we see and experience into the classes of things with which we are already familiar. Slowly all of us learn that, despite the differences that distinguish them from each other, puppies and kittens belong to the same general class called animals.

Unless you understand the meanings of some of the common English class words, you cannot understand or write formal definitions.

Suppose a friend of yours, an exchange student from Nigeria, asks you to define the word horse. How would you respond? Wouldn't you start by putting the creature called horse into a class your friend would understand? Let us consider some possible class words.

NP	VL	CLASS WORDS
A horse	is	man
		brute
		beast
		animal
		mammal

Which of these class words would you pick in order to classify horse objectively and correctly? What is the difference between a brute and a beast? Which class of things--animal or mammal--is the better choice?

Now how would you make clear to your friend the ways in which a horse differs from a cow, which also belongs to the class known as animal or mammal? The second step in formulating this kind of definition is to modify and restrict the class word mammal until it excludes all other mammals and describes only a horse.

A horse is a mammal, but what kind of a mammal? According to Webster's, it is a large, solid-hoofed, herbivorous mammal, domesticated by man, used as a beast of burden, a draft animal, or for riding

and driving. Does this definition limit mammal to exclude cows and camels?

In constructing definitions of this sort, then, you usually take two steps. First, you assign the word to be defined to one of the classes to which it belongs. Then you show how it differs from all other members of this class. Any standard dictionary will provide excellent models from which to work. But only you can select the best classifying word for your purposes and determine the amount of differentiating detail to include.

Let us see how some lexicographers have solved these problems.

Analyzing Patterns of Definition

1. Although each of the following definitions is a complete sentence, the linking verb has been omitted. As you read each one, note to what class the word being defined has been assigned and the placement of the details that separate it from other members of its class.

   plate n. a shallow vessel made of crockery, glass, or wood in which food is served and from which it is eaten at table.

   Portia n. in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, the heroine who acts the part of a lawyer and defeats Shylock's claim for a pound of Antonio's flesh.

   prank n. a mischievous or frolicsome act.

   a. Would you have classified a plate as a vessel? Why do you suppose the lexicographers chose such a general class word?

   b. Did you need to use your dictionary to determine the meaning of the class word in any of these three definitions?
   In each of these definitions the word being defined and the class words are what parts of speech?

2. How does each of the following words differ as to part of speech from those in Exercise 1?

   field v. to catch or pick up a ball coming into outfield and return it to inner field

   gibber v. to talk rapidly and incoherently

   prance v. to move proudly with high steps, as a spirited horse

   a. Is the class word the same part of speech as the word being defined in each example?

   b. What details set each word being defined apart from others in its class?

c. Where are the differentiating details placed in each case?

d. Which definition makes use of example?

3. In another common pattern of definition only the differences that separate the word being defined from other members of its class are given.

powder horn n. a hollow horn of an ox or cow fitted with a cover and used for carrying powder

machine gun n. an automatic gun using small-arms ammunition for rapid continous firing

a. In order to understand these definitions you must know the meanings of which words?

b. Is the word powder horn still in current use?

4. Using your standard dictionary, copy at least two examples of any of these patterns of definition which you think will help you in formulating definitions for your workbook.

Writing Definitions of Your Own

You are now ready to experiment with a few definitions of your own. Before you begin, you and other staff members must make some editorial decisions. Are you going to list more than the most common meaning of each word? Will you use synonyms, antonyms, usage labels, illustrative sentences, or pictures? Who will write which definitions? Who will serve as final editor? Some of these questions need not be answered until you complete Lesson 2, but they should be kept in mind.

When you write a definition, you must first determine the part of speech of the word to be defined. If the pattern of definition calls for a class word, you must select it with care. Is it broad enough or it is narrow enough to be useful? How much differentiating detail are you going to include? You will soon see why a definition often grows into a paragraph, an article, or a book.

After a rough draft of each definition has been written and carefully edited, it may be entered on slips of paper or cards in this manner:

(a)

Kalmiopsis n. a rare shrub with azalea-like blooms and foliage, discovered in Southern Oregon in 1928 and found nowhere else in the world.

The students named their school after the Kalmiopsis that grows in the area.

(b)

three-bagger n. a base hit that allows the batter to reach third base safely; a triple. Tom's three-bagger won the game.

Note that example (b) makes use of a classifying definition as well as a synonym, triple. Example (a) has a great deal more detail than example (b). Both examples make use of illustrative sentences, but neither uses a label. Margins and spacings are more or less uniform throughout as is punctuation. Proper names are capitalized and common nouns are not.

Preparing a Preface and a Title Card

When each entry card has been completed, arrange all entries in alphabetical order as Mulcaster recommended. Then write a brief preface in which you explain the purpose and plan of your loose-leaf wordbook. Address it to your teacher or the persons for whom you have prepared the book. It may be signed and initialed by all staff members.

The last step is to prepare a title card like this:

A COLLECTION of WILD FLOWERS Defined by Nancy Gates Tom Glover Bob Brown Spring, 1966

LESSON 2: HOW LEXICOGRAPHERS WORK

Cape Kennedy, Florida

Pegasus 2 was launched by a Saturn 1 rocket. It was the ninth straight successful Saturn launch. Pegasus, a satellite designed to measure meteoroid hazards, is in orbit ranging from about 320 to 460 miles high.

You can understand this news release without the help of a dictionary, but could Shakespeare have done so?

Have any of the words in the news story been introduced into the English language since the 17th century? Or are they all old words which have acquired new spellings and new meanings? Even if Shakespeare had recognized Pegasus, Saturn, rocket, orbit, satellite and meteoroid as English words, would he have assigned the same meanings to them that you do? A standard dictionary and a little common sense can help you answer these and other questions about some of the new words in today's news.

Checking on the Lexicographers

1. From which languages has English borrowed the proper nouns Pegasus and Saturn, and the common nouns satellite, rocket, orbit, and meteoroid? You can find a key to the etymological symbols--those that tell what a source of a word is--in the front part of your dictionary.

2. With which meanings listed for each of these words might Shakespeare have been familiar?

3. Does your dictionary list the meanings of Pegasus, Saturn, orbit, and launch, as used in the news release?

4. a. Which of the words in the release have undergone the most change?

   b. Which have undergone the least change?

5. Which of these words can have more than one grammatical function; that is, which can serve as a noun as well as a verb, and which as a noun as well as an adjective?

6. Which of the words is the root of a number of compound words? Which of these compounds is spelled as one word, as two words, as a hyphenated word?

7. Do your investigations help you answer the questions in the second paragraph of this lesson?

8. On the basis of your study what would you say is one of the chief tasks of the modern dictionary maker?

Lexicographers as Objective Word-Watchers

Our language is changing so fast that even the most recent editions of dictionaries do not report the latest changes in word meanings.

Lexicographers accept this limitation. They are content to describe the language as it is being used in general and specialized ways by most speakers and writers throughout the world. They are themselves specialists in some aspect of the language, and they work in large groups under the direction of a general editor. Building on the work of their predecessors, they report only widespread changes in the spelling, pronunciation, meaning, and usage of the millions of words they have under observation.

They gather a great deal of evidence about a single new word or meaning before they decide how to define it and describe its current status and use. One group of dictionary makers* recently compiled a desk dictionary of 130,000 entries, but they based these entries on over 10 million examples of language usage. The editors read samples of English sentences written by writers throughout the world. They examined this material for new words, old words with new uses, and continuing old uses. On the basis of this evidence, they added 20,000 new words and meanings to the new edition of their dictionary.

Here is some of the evidence on which they based their decisions about the simple, everyday word deadpan--or is it dead pan?

(For text, see Word Watching, copyright 1964 by G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers of the Merriam-Webster Dictionaries; quotes from "Time Magazine," "Newsweek," "American Scholar," and "Atlantic Monthly.")

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*G. & C. Merriam Co., which publishes the Merriam-Webster Dictionaries. The desk dictionary referred to is Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.

These are only four of the 72 examples of the use of dead pan and deadpan that the dictionary-makers found in recent magazines, books, and newspapers. After sifting all this evidence and measuring it against their definition of standard English, the editors decided that dead pan and deadpan are new additions to standard English and included them in their dictionary.

The same editors labelled as slang the word pan in the sense of face. Why do you suppose they decided deadpan is not slang? Did the editors of your dictionary arrive at these same decisions, or do they differ?

How Lexicographers Use Labels

If we drive across the continent on any one of our national highways, we find it posted throughout with the same kinds of traffic signs and signals. What kind of sign, for instance, says that a crossroad is ahead? What kind of sign announces a railroad crossing?

These familiar signs provide us with instant information so that we can drive at a safe speed and with care for the rights and expectations of other travellers using the same highway.

Why don't dictionary-makers devise a similar set of signals that will give us all the same kind of information about English words and phrases? Lexicographers tell us that marking an international language like English is quite different from marking a four-lane national highway. They point out that the language is over 1,000 years old and that it is used by millions of different people in different parts of the world. Lexicographers, they add, do not legislate rules for using the language, the way state highway commissions make rules for using the highway. Neither are they policemen with authority to enforce the rules of the language.

Lexicographers recognize that all the users of a language--not just its dictionary-makers--decide how it will be used. In fact, as you have already seen, people are constantly changing the language to suit their own needs and conveniences. How much information about the language that a user needs in a dictionary is, then, an individual matter.

Certainly the amount of information you need about a word or phrase depends on the word, your previous experience with it, and the use to which you expect to put it. Assume that you have encountered the word courser in your reading about the Spanish conquistadors. From the context in which you found it you decided that it meant a spirited horse. You use the word in describing a pinto pony you ride every summer, and your teacher questions your use of the word. You look up the word in your dictionary. You find that it means "a fleet, spirited horse" but it is marked Poetic. You change courser to pony. Why?

Not all dictionary-makers provide this kind of helpful information. They assume that by hearing and reading the language you will eventually determine for yourself how certain words are used. You do, of course, know a great deal about how certain people use the language. You know

that on some occasions some people use the language very differently. Do the minister in the pulpit and the milkman soliciting an order use the same kind of language? When they chat with each other about the weather or about gardening, how does their use of language compare? Which of these uses would you call formal? Which would you call informal?

Can you think of occasions on which your own language is formal and of other occasions on which it is highly informal?

Some dictionaries mark as informal the kind of language that educated people use in friendly, relaxed social situations--ordinary conversation, for example. But no dictionary labels the kind of language we call formal. The editor assumes that anyone who knows how to use formal language knows when to use it. All of us shift from formal to informal language as the occasion demands--without the help of a dictionary. Thus a label marking a word as formal is unnecessary. A label marking a word as informal may help us somewhat in writing, where informal language is less common than in conversation .

Other kinds of language shifts are less automatic. We are often uncertain whether a term like deadpan has become a standard English word that educated speakers and writers use,or whether if falls into one of the many subclasses of words that we can lump together as non-standard.

Most dictionary makers concentrate on the standard words of the language. They give variations in spelling indicate the usual pronunciations, list meanings according to a stated plan, provide pictures or illustrative sentences as well as common synonyms or antonyms. By the use of labels they may also indicate a word's origin--if it is known--as well as the region of the United States or of the English-speaking world in which it is most widely used. They may mark one of the meanings of a word Archaic--old-fashioned but still in use--as gale in the sense of breeze; or Obsolete--no longer in circulation though found in printed materials--as knavery in the sense of mischief. Labels like these that tell us about the origins, geographic locations, and currency of standard words are interesting, though we may not usually make much use of them.

As a dictionary user, you are more concerned with the labels applied to the so-called non-standard words. Technical words, trade jargon, slang, and sports terms make up the bulk of this language which is widely used but by various limited groups of people in certain circumstances. Nearly all of us make some use of such words every day, along with a great many standard words. But we must be careful in choosing whether we should use a non-standard term since such a word often is not appropriate to the situation we find ourselves in. The dictionary cannot tell us which of two terms to use, but it can tell us which term most users of the language consider non-standard. On the basis of this information we can usually make a decision. Or the dictionary can help us restrict strange words we meet in our reading to their proper fields. For instance, to what fields are the words forepeak and zither usually restricted? In writing a letter to your principal, should you refer to your "folks"?

or would "parents" be more appropriate? Why? Does your dictionary help you answer either or both of these questions?

To help us decide such questions, most dictionary makers provide more or less exact field labels like Mil., Bot., Agric., Phot. What do you think these labels stand for? Does your dictionary use these and other similar terms?

Some dictionaries also use more general and less exact terms like Informal, already discussed, Colloquial, Slang, Illiterate. What do these terms mean and how can we use them when they are supplied by our dictionary makers?

The most recently edited English dictionary, Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (G. & C. Merriam Co.), makes limited use of such labels. The editors say that there is no completely objective test for labelling the use of a word out of context. They do, however, label some words that most educated speakers clearly regard as slang or non-standard or sub-standard. The common usage labels are, of course, defined, along with other words of the language, in the body of the dictionary.

Let us study their definitions of this set of related usage labels before we try to apply them ourselves in definitions of our own.

Informal--"characteristic of or appropriate to ordinary, casual, or familiar use"

What words are substituted for informal in this definition? What parts of speech are they? Think of at least one informal situation that calls for use of informal language.

Colloquial--"used in or characteristic of familiar and informal conversation"

What is the key word in this definition? To what kind of conversation does the term colloquial refer? In what kinds of writing do we often use words that our dictionaries may label colloquial?

Slang--"an informal, nonstandard vocabulary composed typically of coinages, arbitrarily changed words, and extravagant, forced, and facetious figures of speech"

According to this definition, slang is not only informal and non-standard but it also has other characteristics that make it different from either of these larger classes of words. Can you give an example of a coinage, an arbitrarily changed word? Can you think of an extravagant figure of speech or metaphor such as "bald as an egg"? A forced one like "dumb as a doorknob"? Or a facetious one like "She eats like a bird--a peck at a time"? Do you think this is a satisfactory definition of slang? If not, what changes would you make?

Illiterate--"violating approved patterns of speaking or writing"

You probably know what a violation is, but unless you know what approved patterns of speaking and writing are, you may not find this definition very helpful. Is it the most general or the most specific of the four terms given above? Can you improve it?

Using Usage Labels

1. Which of the above usage labels does your dictionary use?

2. Select any three labelled words from your dictionary and tell under what conditions you or another user of the language would find the label helpful.

3. Do the editors of your dictionary label any of the meanings of these words? If so, what labels do they use in each case?

Sam Brown belt	pastor	crack	skirl
kangaroo court	octane	hurry-scurry	clew

4. Assume that you are preparing an English dictionary for a foreign friend. Provide an informative and appropriate label for each word. You may need to turn to your dictionary for help.

mass noun	dribble (as a verb)	dust bowl
prairie schooner	buggy (as a noun, as an adj)	dimwit
mug (as a face)	justice of the peace	potlatch

5. Using the definitions of Informal, Colloquial, Slang, and Illiterate given above, list under each heading at least four examples drawn from your reading of news and comic strips, and daily conversation. If some of these classes seem to overlap, you may have to be arbitrary--like a lexicographer--and explain the reason for your decision to the teacher of the class.

Watching Lexicographers Work

Each general editor, you are beginning to see, strives to make his dictionary attractive and helpful to a certain class of users. The editors of some dictionaries aim to help high school students. Other dictionaries are edited for college students and business or professional people. Each editor decides on the kind of information he thinks that the people who will use his dictionary will need. Then he devises a plan for presenting this information in a consistent and economical way.

Quarrelling or quibbling about differences in how dictionaries present word information is pointless, especially if it blinds us to the many similarities among modern American dictionaries. In general, lexicographers agree on the nature of their work and how to go about doing it.

In compiling dictionaries, all responsible lexicographers keep in mind the various ways in which words pass in and out of the language and undergo changes within it. They do not, of course, invent the processes

by which our everyday language is enriched and enlivened and stretched in new directions. Neither do they try to speed up or slow down these processes. They simply observe, describe, and report--in various ways --the results of these processes. But unlike most of us they understand how these common, everyday processes work.

Just how do lexicographers go about their work and what can we learn from watching them?

For one thing, they alert us to one of our habits of picking up a foreign word like sputnik and spelling and pronouncing it as though it were an English word. They report on our tendency to use new combinations like dollarwise and costwise, patterned after respectable old words like otherwise and clockwise. Does your dictionary list any or all of these new word forms?

They also tell us that inventive speakers of our language sometimes blend words like blow and spurt into a new word like blurt. They put into their dictionaries a word like blurb, coined by a playful writer, as soon as they discover it is widely used. What, for instance, does your dictionary say about the origins and meanings of blurt and blurb?

Lexicographers help us recognize our ability and skill in combining old words to form new and colorful compounds like rat race, thunder egg, and sure-fire, as well as our reliance on fixed phrases like man in the street and put up with. How many of these compounds do you find in your dictionary?

They also list the meanings of our growing stock of acronyms --words formed by combining the initial letters of words--such as FBI, CARE, and ZIP. Can you decode each of these acronyms? Use your dictionary if you need to.

Since lexicographers are trained to observe these processes by which new words and new meanings for old words are invented, they are better able than most of us to determine whether a new word or a new meaning of an old word is likely to become a permanent part of our language. With a little practice, however, you too can observe some of these processes at work in the language you hear and read. In fact, you may be able to detect some new and useful meanings that are not yet listed in your dictionary.

Working like a Lexicographer

1. Find at least three foreign words that are becoming a part of the English language. Travel sections of newspapers and magazines are one good source for such new words and meanings.

2. Many new words are made up by people who write advertisements. They often experiment by combining old word endings and stems in new ways. One such writer coined the word winter-ize. Why, do you suppose, no one has yet suggested the word summer-ize?

Look up the meanings of at least two of these standard word endings: wise, ize, ship, craft, ism, ary, ory, ful, able, less. Report on any new words you find that make use of these forms.

3. Blended words like brunch--made up of breakfast and what other word?--are fun to use and make, even if they do not become a permanent part of the language. If you cannot find such a word, make up one and ask the class to guess what it means.

4. New words are being made in a great many other ways every day. Sometimes they are simply slips of the tongue like gerk for jerk. Sometimes they are carefully planned, as was the word bel. What does it mean and how was it formed, according to your dictionary?

Invent at least two new words to fill gaps in the language such as a white for a walk in space. Be prepared to use these new words in sentences and submit them to class test.

5. Interesting new compounds and fixed phrases like the week that was abound in reading materials and conversation. In time they come to take on a single, definable meaning. Try to track down at least three which you think are widely enough used to deserve being included in a dictionary.

6. Spotting acronyms is simple because they are always printed in capital letters. Determining their meanings is often more difficult. List and define at least three that you find useful.

7. Have your class discussions turned up new words that some class members may include in the wordbooks they are editing? In any event, discussion of some of the simpler processes that bring about changes in language should be helpful to you in your work as lexicographers.

Detecting Gradual Changes in Word Meanings

Not all changes in word meanings can be so easily detected. Some are so gradual that only a lexicographer, building on the work of others, can chart these changes. They are the results of processes that we cannot see without the help of lexicographers.

The meanings of words, like a great many other things, are subject to gradual expansion as well as contraction. That is, over long periods of time users of the language stretch or extend the meanings of some words and put them to new and more general uses; or they may contract the meanings of others and put the words to more specific uses.

Let us see how these processes work. The word companion used to refer only to a person with whom one shared bread. Now you use this word to refer to a friend--a person with whom you do a great number of things. By means of the same stretching and generalizing process, the meaning of the word lousy has been changed from that of lice-ridden to the more general meaning of disgusting. When you use

this slang term to describe the weather, do you even think of its original, more specialized or restricted meaning?

At the same time some or all of the meanings of other words have been shrinking or becoming more specialized than they once were. According to lexicographers, our everyday word planet once meant any kind of wanderer. Now it stands for only what special kind of wanderer? This restricting process is also reflected in the change in the meaning of the word meat. Once it referred to all kinds of solid food as opposed to drink, as in the phrase "meat and drink." Now it refers only to what special kind of food?

Other kinds of gradual changes in the meanings of words can be accounted for by another set of related processes. These processes act as elevators which raise and lower the meaning of words. The word knight once simply meant young boy. Before Shakespeare's time it had acquired a more elevated or elegant meaning. Which meanings does your dictionary list? In what way is any one of these meanings related to the meaning that the word knight has acquired in the game of chess?

The word governor, the title of the highest officer of one of our states, once meant pilot or guide. Has its meaning been raised or lowered during long centuries of use? Many other words like this, which started on a low or humble level, have gradually acquired more elevated meanings. Sometimes, as in the case of governor, they retained their old meanings along with their later and more elevated meanings. Can you think of a sentence in which the word governor has its old meaning?

Still other words have undergone the reverse process. Starting with favorable meanings, they have come down in the world of words; that is, they have acquired low and even bad meanings. For instance, Shakespeare once spoke of "the sweet stink of flowers." Why can't you do so today?

Dictionaries that purposely omit all meanings that were in use before 1755--the year that Samuel Johnson revolutionized dictionary-making in England--do not list all these gradual changes in meanings. Do you think that the editors of such dictionaries are right in reasoning that few Americans make use of English meanings more than two hundred years old? Why?

By conducting some dictionary experiments of your own, you can see how these two sets of processes, along with others, have worked on our language. Keep in mind that these processes have sometimes operated together and sometimes singly to change the meanings of many English words.

Testing Some Gradual Changes in Word Meanings

An obsolete meaning is listed alongside each of the following words. With the help of your dictionary, you can find the current meaning of each word. Then you can determine in which directions some of the meanings of the word have moved during centuries of hard use.

1. Has the meaning of each of these words become more general or more specialized; that is, has its meaning been expanded or contracted?

Word	Obsolete or Original Meaning
scene	tent, covered place
corn	grain of all kinds
zone	belt
starve	die of any cause
scorn	dehorn
upshot	last shot in any archery contest

2. Has the meaning of each of these words moved up or down the social ladder; that is, is its current meaning more or less favorable or elevated than it once was?

Word	Obsolete or Original Meaning
marshall	stable boy
uncouth	strange, unknown
sinister	left-handed
conspire	breathetogether
angel	messenger
jewel	trifle
villain	a country fellow

3. If you do a little sleuthing, you may be able to detect some evidence of the processes of change at work on our language. With the help of your dictionary, you should be able to determine what has happened to the meanings of the words given below.

a. At least one meaning of each of the following words is becoming more inclusive or general, or more specialized and limited. Can you determine in which direction each word has moved?

holiday	boycott	spill (verb)
mammoth	derrick	thug
minister	liquor	zest
tyrant	doom	
assassin	picture	
doctor	layman	
meat	injury	

b. The meaning of a word, you remember, may also undergo a process of elevating or lowering --that is, of taking on a better meaning or a worse one. Which process has each of the following words undergone?

myth	propaganda	hussy
cheap	handsome	cowboy
naughty	wretch	pioneer
cunning	rascal	counterfeit
Yankee	crafty	belly

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

HISTORY OF ENGLISH: PART 1

EARLY MODERN ENGLISH---THE LANGUAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Language Curriculum III

Student Version

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I. Introduction to the Student

Our study of language thus far has dealt only with English as it is used today. You have learned that the English spoken in one part of the United States is often very different from that spoken in other regions. These differences are not restricted to pronunciation, but are seen also in the names given to certain objects or actions and in the way some common expressions are put together. In brief, American English consists of several regional dialects which differ in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. You also found that within any regional dialect there are language differences brought about primarily by education. The term social dialects was used to designate language differences of this kind. You probably have studied only one social dialect in school--namely, Standard English, the dialect of educated Americans who carry on the affairs of our country. Finally, you learned that within all dialects of spoken and written English there are several different styles ranging from those which are very formal to those that are highly informal.

In a previous unit, you also have traced the history of the alphabetic writing system used in writing English. One of the most important things you discovered in that unit was that there is no necessary connection between a language and the set of symbols used to write it. Since phonetic writing is simply a visual representation of speech, any set of symbols could be used to represent the significant sounds of our language. Alphabetic writing had existed for nearly two thousand years before such a system was used for writing English. We also know that the group of dialects called Old English had been spoken for centuries before it was first written. Thus we see that the history of writing and the history of a language are two entirely different things.

However, scholars can trace the history of the English language back only as far as there are written records, since speech itself leaves no traces for them to study. Despite this limitation, they have been able to reconstruct the parent language of English by using a method of study called comparative grammar. Thus, even though we have no written records of very early languages, linguists can determine many facts about the ancestors of our modern languages. It is the purpose of this unit to begin the task of tracing the history of English. In this unit and succeeding ones, you will take a close look at English in various stages of its development.

II. Language Change

To speak of different "stages" in the growth of a language is perhaps misleading. Although linguists have discovered that languages are undergoing constant change, the process is such a gradual one that the unobservant user of the language is unaware of it. At no point in the history of English was the language of one generation not understood by the one following it. However, over several centuries the changes in English have been so great that very early written records of it seem like a foreign language to present-day Americans. One effective way of examining changes in a language is to analyze the writing of one or more authors of a particular period and to compare the language of this period with that of earlier and later times. In order to see significant changes, we would have to choose examples of language that are separated by a considerable length of time,

or otherwise we might be misled by the larger number of similarities. Understanding how our language came to be what it is today will help explain some very unusual features of English.

If samples of written English from each of the last twelve centuries were laid out before us, we might possibly pick out features which are found only in the English of each particular period. More than likely, however, we would need the help of a language expert (a linguist) to find such differences. All parts of a language are affected by change. The words which make up the English vocabulary, the meanings of these words, the spelling, the grammar of English sentences, and the pronunciation of English sounds--all these have undergone change and are undergoing further change.

Early American English. Even the Standard Written English of eighteenth century American writers is not identical with the language of today. Look at the following quotation from Benjamin Franklin's autobiography written 1771:

> Josiah, my father, married young, and carried his wife with three children into New England about 1682. The conventicles having been forbidden by law and frequently disturbed induced some considerable men of his acquaintance to remove to that country, and he was prevailed with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy their mode of religion with freedom.

Although you have no difficulty understanding Franklin's story, there are words and expressions which may seem strange or are completely unknown to you. His use of the verb carried to mean 'convey,' 'escort,' or 'conduct' may strike you as unusual, as may his particular use of considerable, to remove, and prevailed with. The word thither sounds definitely old-fashioned to present-day Americans. And even though we can readily study Franklin's vocabulary, spelling, and sentence structure, we are unable to say with certainty how he pronounced his words.

Middle English. Going back even further and into the literature of England, we come upon a piece of poetry written shortly after 1387 by the famous poet Geoffrey Chaucer. Try to read the following excerpt from "The Prologue" to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales:

> Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
> In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
> Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
> To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
> At night was come in-to that hostelrye
> Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
> Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
> In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
> That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde . . .

In this selection, the problem of merely understanding the narrative is much more difficult than in the preceding one. Even if the spelling

differences were eliminated, the problems of word order, unfamiliar verb forms, and strange vocabulary remain. If we could, by some miracle, actually hear Chaucer read his poetry, his pronunciation would surely convince us that his English is different from our own.

Early Modern English. In an effort to begin our study of the history of the English language in the easiest and best possible way, we have selected the language of Shakespeare as the first stop in our imaginary journey back to the origins of our language. There are several reasons for this choice: (1) the writings of Shakespeare are commonly found in literature textbooks, (2) his plays are often performed on the stage and studied in English classes, and (3) his language is fairly easy for most Americans to read. Chronologically, the language of Shakespeare stands halfway between that of Chaucer and that of Franklin. His language is enough like our own to present few difficulties, but also different enough to permit us to discover some very important facts about language change. By examining the English of 1600, you will become acquainted with the processes by which a language gains new words, loses old ones, and develops new meanings for still others. You will begin to appreciate how little English sentence structure has changed in nearly four hundred years. Finally, you should begin to understand how political, social, and cultural events have affected the English language.

III. Historical Background of Early Modern English

There is an even more important reason for choosing the language of Shakespeare for particular study. The language of London, as a result of the great importance of that city and its people, had already been established in Shakespeare's time as the Standard Written English of Great Britain. It is this Standard Written English which crossed the seas with our first American settlers in 1607. And, just as importantly, the spoken dialects of London and its vicinity were very prominent among those spoken by these and later colonists. The foundations of our own American regional dialects were laid by these early settlers who, for the most part, wrote and spoke the language of Shakespeare.

By 1600, the printing press had made it possible for books to be printed cheaply, and popular education had greatly increased the number of Englishmen who could read and write. Estimates differ, but it is probable that one-third to one-half of those living in London in 1600 could at least read.[1] During Shakespeare's life, the British Empire expanded both its trade and its political influence into many parts of the new world. As the hub of the British Empire, London played a very important role in the affairs of the world in 1600. Consequently, the language of London occupied a position of highest importance among the languages of the world.

During Shakespeare's lifetime, a great revival of interest in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome was under way. Scholars who had

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[1]Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, 2nd ed. (New York, 1957), p. 241.

previously been content to write only in Latin or Greek were now busy translating into English the great writings of the past. Looking upon Latin as being a nearly perfect language, these scholars considered it quite proper to borrow words from Latin whenever they found the English vocabulary inadequate. Efforts such as these to "improve" the English language resulted in the borrowing of several thousand Latin words. Combined with the borrowings from other languages, this host of new words greatly expanded the English vocabulary. The new words sometimes brought about the loss of native words (those found in the earliest stages of English), but in other instances the native word won out. When both the native word and the new import were kept, the result was a pair of near synonyms that were very useful in expressing slight differences of meaning. The first item in each of the following pairs is the native word; the second is the Latin borrowing: free - emancipate, work - labor, quench - extinguish, be - exist.

The effects of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries upon the English language are clearly seen in the thousands of borrowed words in Modern English which have come not only from Latin but also from French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and many others. During this period, it has been estimated that nearly 10,000 new words entered the English vocabulary.[2] In contrast to this, the development of Standard Written English appears to have had just the opposite effect upon the grammar of the English sentence. Very few changes in the basic structure of English sentences have occurred since Shakespeare's time.

English spelling, which had in earlier times been somewhat a matter of individual taste, was fixed in its modern form by 1650. Some changes have taken place in both English and American spelling since then, but they have not been far-reaching ones. Shakespeare might have continued to speak in his own Warwickshire dialect, but he wrote in the dialect of the educated Londoner--Standard Written English. The establishment of a standard written language was to have important consequences, especially for the spelling of Modern English. The fact that many English sounds have changed in the past five centuries while the writing system has changed very little lies at the root of our present-day spelling difficulties. Our writing system does not represent in any consistent way the sounds of spoken English.

In the following sections, you will study the language of Shakespeare as it is found in a modern edition of one of his plays, The Merchant of Venice.[3] You will explore in some detail the differences between the vocabulary that you now use and the vocabulary that Shakespeare used. In addition to this, you will analyze some relatively small changes in grammar that have taken place since the play was written in 1600.

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[2]Baugh, p. 280.

[3]Louis B. Wright and Virginia A. Lamar, eds., The Merchant of Venice, The Folger Library General Reader's Shakespeare (Washington Square Press edition, W 116), (New York, 1960).

IV. Early Modern English

A. The vocabulary

To some people, language and vocabulary are the same thing. That is, they mistake the language for its vocabulary. We should always keep in mind that a language is more than just a collection of words. We could know the meaning and pronunciation of every English word and yet be unable to write or speak an English sentence. Language also includes a very complex set of rules governing the ways that these words can be put together. Vocabulary, however, is one part of a language that shows the results of historical change in a very dramatic way.

There are several ways in which the vocabulary of a language undergoes change: (1) words can be lost (that is, cease being used), (2) new words can be added from several possible sources, and (3) words can change their meanings in many different ways. Vocabulary change is strikingly illustrated by the fact that the editors of the newest unabridged American dictionary, Webster's Third International Edition, were faced with 50,000 new words which did not appear in the 1934 edition and 50,000 additional meanings for words already entered. It is hard to imagine how so many changes could occur in less than thirty years. Let us consider three kinds of vocabulary change: word losses, word borrowings, and shifts in meaning.

Word losses. Several words that we come across in The Merchant of Venice are not usually found in American English dialects. The following words taken from the play sound either old-fashioned or foreign to American ears: methoughts, ere, mo, forthwith, hither, thither, betwixt, sooth, sirrah, anon, withal, an (in the sense of 'if'), throstle, hie, gramercy, beshrew, fraught, iwis, betimes, bespeak, forsworn, and wether. Most of these words have simply been replaced by others. For example, in the following pairs of words, the second word has replaced the first one in modern American English: ere - before, mo - more, betwixt - between, an - if, iwis - certainly, and bespeak - engage (or hire). A word like throstle, although common in Scotland, is not found in American dialects, thrush being the common term here. When Bassanio tells Portia that he lives upon the "rack" (III. ii. 26),[4] he uses a word that has little meaning for many readers, since that particular device of torture is little used today. Similarly, the "ague" that Salerio mentions (I. i. 24) is not familiar to modern readers who use other terms to stand for 'chills and fever.'

On the other hand, many of the words in our own everyday speech would be strange to William Shakespeare. New ideas, inventions, and discoveries must have names. Recent space exploration has given rise to such terms as astronaut, space capsule, count-down, and Sputnik;

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[4] In this and later references to the play The Merchant of Venice, the numerals in the parentheses stand for the act, the scene, and the line(s), respectively. All such references are based upon the Folger Library edition of the play cited on page 4 of this unit.

while the field of atomic research has given us plutonium, half life, H-bomb, and fall-out. Every branch of knowledge produces its share of new terms; some of these will survive, but others will disappear from the language. If an idea or an object is lost to a language community, the word that stood for the idea or object is usually lost, too. Occasionally, however, a word may survive by becoming attached to a similar object or concept. For example, the word artillery originally stood for rather primitive 'engines of war' used to throw rocks and other missiles. These 'engines' are no longer seen on the battlefield, but the word became attached to the newer 'mounted guns' and lives on in the English vocabulary. It remains to be seen whether the newest rockets will come to be called "artillery", also.

Word borrowings. Thousands of Latin words entered English during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries chiefly because Latin enjoyed a high prestige among English scholars. Instead of creating new words out of the stock that was available, they borrowed Latin words in an attempt to "expand and improve" the English vocabulary which they found to be inadequate. Shakespeare himself used many of these new borrowings in his plays. The following words from Shakespeare's writings were new to the English language in the sixteenth century: agile, allurement, antipathy, catastrophe, consonancy, critical, demonstrate, dire, discountenance, emphasis, emulate, expostulation, extract, hereditary, horrid, impertinency, meditate, modest, pathetical, prodigious, and vast.[5] The first recorded use in English of many borrowed words occurs in the writings of Shakespeare: accommodation, apostrophe, assassination, dextrously, dislocate, frugal, indistinguishable, misanthrope, obscene, pedant, premeditated, reliance, and submerge.[6] It seems clear that he found the new borrowings very useful; he was not afraid to "experiment" with language.

Shifts in meaning. Words are not only lost and borrowed; they also change their meanings in several ways. One way that meanings change is by a shift of emphasis to only one part of the word's original meaning. That is, one part of the former meaning takes over as the "new meaning" of a word. For example, the word knave, used by Shylock in reference to Launcelot Gobbo (I. iii. 173), originally meant 'boy.' But, since many boys were servants, the word shifted its meaning to that particular idea and came to mean 'servant.' Finally, the word took on the meaning of 'rascal,' since many servants were just that--perhaps even Launcelot. When Bassanio refers to Shylock as a villain (I. iii. 182), he probably means that Shylock is a 'boor,' an 'ill-mannered person,' but the original meaning was quite different. In its earliest use, villain was merely a 'farm hand,' but now we use it to denote a 'wicked person' or a 'scoundrel.'

Both knave and villain have shifted from relatively neutral meanings to ones that emphasize bad qualities. Linguists call such shifts of meaning down the moral scale of values degradation. When Bassanio tells his two friends that they "grow exceeding strange" (I. i. 70), he uses the word in a sense unlike its earliest meaning of 'foreign.' His meaning is closer to 'unfamiliar' or 'distant,' meanings which do not have the present-day

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[5]Baugh, p. 281.

[6]Ibid.

suggestion of 'peculiar' or 'odd.' To call something strange today is to imply that something is wrong with it. The meaning of strange, then, has degraded. Later in the play, Bassanio uses the word counterfeit in the sense of a 'copy of likeness' when he exclaims, "Fair Portia's counterfeit!" (III. ii. 18). Today the word is used in a derogatory sense of 'an imitation made to deceive.'

Words can also travel upwards along the scale of goodness and badness. Linguists call this process elevation. The word nice originally carried the meaning of 'ignorant,' but during Shakespeare's time it acquired the meaning of 'fastidious' or 'difficult ot please.' The word took another step upwards when it came to mean 'precise' or 'subtle.' Finally, the word nice has taken several new meanings which all have agreeable connotations: 'pleasant,' 'attractive,' 'kind,' 'well-mannered,' or 'in good taste.' Clearly, nice has come up in the world. The word naughty, as Portia uses it in the play (V. i. 99), meant literally 'good for nothing.' But today's meaning is 'mischievous' or 'improper,' certainly a less derogatory sense than the earlier one.

Several other words used by Shakespeare in The Merchant of Venice have acquired new meanings. Would, the past tense form of will, is often used as a verb meaning 'want,' 'wish,' or desire.' For example, Bassanio asks, "What would you?" (II. ii. 130). In this usage it is the main verb, but today we restrict its use to that of a modal: "What would you like?" The word presently has also undergone a change of meaning. Both Antonio and Nerissa use the word in its earliest meaning of 'at this present moment.' Antonio says, "Bassanio presently will go aboard" (II. viii. 67), and Nerissa says, "And comes to his election presently" (II. ix. 4). Today the word means 'soon,' 'shortly,' or 'in a little while,' though some people, curiously enough, are now beginning to use it again in what is very close to its older meaning ('currently' or 'at the present time,' as in "We are presently considering his request'). Portia uses the word discover in its original sense of 'reveal' (II. vii. 1), but we would never use it in such a way now. Lorenzo uses the word expect in its earliest meaning of 'await' when he says, "Sweet soul, let's in and there expect their coming. . ." (V. i. 57). Present-day meanings of expect are far from the meaning it had when first borrowed from Latin; we now use it to mean 'to look forward to' or 'to look for as due.'

A famous student of the English language, Otto Jespersen, has stated that "Shakespeare has succeeded in creating for Shylock a language different from that of anybody else."[7] Among other things, he mentions Shylock's Old Testament references and his peculiar use of certain words: advantage, thrift, usance, moneys, equal, rheum, estimable, fulsome, eanling, misbeliever, and bane. It is partly by means of vocabulary that Shakespeare marks Shylock as the uncommon fellow that he is.

Changes in vocabulary have been going on for as long as we have records of the English language. The forces which cause these shifts of meaning, losses of words, and the borrowing of foreign words are too complex to concern us here. But the reader must be especially aware of shifts of meaning

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[7]Otto Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, 9th ed., a Doubleday Anchor Book, A-46, p. 232.

whenever he reads literature of the distant past. Attention to such matters can help us understand more precisely what an author has to say.

Exercise 1.

The following words have been taken from The Merchant of Venice. For each word, indicate how the meaning of the word as it is used in the play differs from the meaning we give it today. For examples of this sort, see expect and discover, above.

1.	suddenly	(II. viii. 35)	6.	conceit	(III. iv. 2)
2.	stay	(II. vi. 50)	7.	prevented	(I. i. 63)
3.	fond	(III. iii. 10)	8.	necessity	(I. iii. 157)
4.	naughty	(III. ii. 18)	9.	feared	(II. i. 9)
5.	danger	(IV. i. 133)	10.	o'erlooked	(III. ii. 15)

Exercise 2

Using the notes in the Folger text and a dictionary, find and record what the following words meant in Shakespeare's time. Give their approximate equivalent meanings in Modern English.

1.	sooth	(I. i. 1)	6.	shrive	(I. ii. 123)
2.	ere	(I. ii. 10)	7.	wroth	(II. ix. 81)
3.	piece	(III. ii. 22)	8.	withal	(III. i. 47)
4.	forthwith	(I. iii. 174)	9.	sirrah	(III. v. 42)
5.	ergo	(II. ii. 52)	10.	naught	(V. i. 213)

B. The Grammar

The grammar of Early Modern English is, on the whole, very much like that of Modern American English. In other words, Shakespeare wrote English sentences using very nearly the same set of grammatical rules that you do. The differences in sentence structure and word forms are minor ones and, where they do exist, are not serious obstacles to communication. Different verb and pronoun forms are perhaps the most obvious to the eye, but you can learn these special forms in just a few minutes. Differences of a more essential kind are those of word order, the use of auxiliaries, and the application of certain transformation rules upon kernel sentences. The grammatical items chosen for this unit are as follows: pronoun forms, verb forms, the auxiliary be + ing, yes/no question transformation, passive transformation, the auxiliary have + en, and negatives.

Pronoun forms. The forms of certain second and third person pronouns stand out as an obvious difference between our English and Shakespeare's. Nerissa, speaking to her superior, says, "You need not fear it, Lady. . ." (I. ii. 92), but Antonio, when speaking to Shylock, his social inferior, says, "If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not / As to thy friends. . ." (I. iii. 132-3). Antonio also uses thou in addressing his intimate friend, Bassanio: "Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea. . ." (I. i. 181). In general, Shakespeare's characters observe the following rules in the use of second

person pronouns: (1) When addressing either social inferiors or very close friends, they use the forms thou, thee, thy, and thine. (2) When addressing their social superiors, they use the more formal pronouns you, ye, your, and yours as a mark of respect. At times these rules are ignored. For example, Bassanio says to his friend, "Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano. / Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice-- / Parts that become thee happily enough. . ." (II. ii. 170-2).

Thee is used consistently in object positions; thou occurs regularly as a subject. The pronoun ye occurs in the expression, "Fare ye well" (I. i. 107), but it has been used less and less often until it has nearly disappeared in Modern English usage. Through the seventeenth century, ye alternated with you in subject positions, but later (in the eighteenth century) ye was used alternatively with you in object positions. Today we use the form you in both subject and object positions, and the familiar forms like thou and thee are no longer used except in some religious services and among members of the Society of Friends, the Quakers.

Two other uses of pronouns may seem unusual to you. The possessive form its is not found in the play; the form his is used in its place: "How far that little candle throws his beams!" (V. i. 98). The use of its did not come into general written use until after 1650, although it was probably used in speech since a much earlier time. Secondly, the reflexive pronouns (myself, himself, etc.) are sometimes found in unusual places: "Thyself shall see the act" (IV. i. 325) and "This house, these servants, and this same myself / Are yours, my lord" (II. ii. 173-4). But in a place where we would normally use a reflexive pronoun, Shakespeare uses an objective form: "Signior Antonio / Commends him to you" (III. ii. 238-9).

Exercise 3.

Look back through the play and determine which pronoun forms were used in each of the following situations:

1. Portia speaking to Nerissa, to Shylock, to Antonio, to Bassanio
2. Shylock speaking to Antonio, to the Duke, to the jailer
3. Bassanio speaking to Antonio, to Portia, to Shylock, to Launcelot
4. Launcelot speaking to Shylock, to Jessica, to his own father, to Bassanio

Verb forms. A conspicuous mark of Shakespeare's English is the -eth ending used with the verb in third person singular. What is even more interesting is that the modern form in -s occurs more frequently in the plays. In the trial scene, for example, the verbs ending in -s occur twice as often as those in -eth. Both forms seem acceptable in all situations. A messenger states, ". . . From whom he bringeth sensible regrets" (II. ix. 93); and Portia says, ". . . for he doth nothing but talk of his horse" (I. ii. 37); and a message on one of the caskets reads, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath" (II. vii. 9). The two competing forms even occur together: Portia says, "It blesseth him that gives and him that takes" (IV. i. 192); and Gratiano states, "Who riseth from a feast / With that keen appetite that he sits down?" (II. vi. 9-10); and a message on another casket reads, "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves" (II. vii. 7). Very often the need for an extra syllable in the line of poetry

made it necessary to use the -eth form. Although the -eth forms continued to be used in writing long after Shakespeare's time, it is probable that the -s forms were nearly always used in speech even in the seventeenth century.

The second person pronoun thou required a verb ending in -est. Antonio says to Bassanio, "Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea. . ." (I. i. 181), and Portia says to her servant, ". . .and as thou namest them, I will describe them. . ." (I. ii. 33-4). The auxiliaries after thou took several forms: thou wilt, thou shalt, thou mayst, thou hast, thou art, thou canst, thou dost, etc. This practice was common in writing through the nineteenth century, but now the -est forms are considered archaic, or out of date. As you was replacing thou as the singular pronoun, the -est forms were being displaced also.

Occasionally you will find a verb form that would be considered incorrect in today's usage. Unusual verb forms such as writ, fretten, have spoke, and spet are simply earlier forms that no longer exist in Standard Modern English. Even today some of our past participle forms show some variation, and it is not certain which forms will eventually survive: proved - proven, shrunk - shrunken, got - gotten, dreamed - dreamt.

Exercise 4.

1. Find and list at least five quotations from the play that have verb forms ending in -eth.
2. Find and list at least five other quotations in which the -s form of the verb is used. Like those quotations asked for in question 1, the subject of these verbs will be in third person singular.

The auxiliary be + ing. Shakespeare uses the auxiliary be + ing very seldom. In Modern English, we use this "progressive" form to express (among other things) actions that are in progress or continuing: "He is talking to the police." Quite often Shakespeare uses the verb form ending in -s in sentences that would require be + ing in Modern English:

". . .he grows kind." (Antonio - I. iii. 181)
"Yonder, sir, he walks." (Leonardo -II. ii. 163)
"The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath
And comes to his election presently." (Nerissa -II. ix. 3-4)
"Now he goes /With no less presence. . ." (Portia -III. ii. 55-6)
"He comes, my lord." (Salerio -IV. i. 16)

In each of these expressions, you would have used the auxiliary be + ing with the verb and come up with something like the following: "He is growing kind." "He is walking." ". . .and is coming to his election." "Now he is going." "He is coming." The progressive forms with be + ing do occur in the play, but not frequently.

"Your mind is tossing on the oceans. . ." (Salerio -I. i. 8)
"I should be still / Plucking the grass. . ." (Solanio -I. i. 17)
"I am debating of my present store. . ." (Shylock -I. iii. 50)
"When every goose is cackling. . ." (Portia -VI. i. 113)
"We have been praying for our husbands' welfare. . ." (Portia -V. i. 124)

The be + ing form becomes more common as we move from Shakespeare's English toward Modern English. Today the form is an important part of

the English auxiliary. With the exception of such verbs as know, cost, and equal, the form be + ing can be added to any English verb.

Yes/No question transformations. In asking questions of the yes/no type, Shakespeare's characters show us another way in which the language of 1600 is different from Modern English. The word order used in such questions is not the same as ours. The most common arrangement in Early Modern English was to move the main verb and the tense to a position in front of the subject when there were no other auxiliaries present in the sentence. The following quotations illustrate this pattern:

"Call you?" (Jessica -II. v. 11).
"Hates any man the thing he would not kill?" (Shylock -IV. i. 68)
"Wouldst thou aught with me?" (Bassanio -II. ii. 111)
"Mark you but that?" (Portia -V. i. 261)
"Come you from old Bellario?" (Duke -IV. i. 170)
"Have you anything to say?" (Portia -IV. i. 272)
"Was not that letter from fair Jessica?" (Gratiano -II. iv. 31)

In the first five of these examples, we would have used the word do in asking the question: "Did you call?" "Does any man hate the thing he would not kill?" "Did you want me for anything?" "Did you mark only that?" "Did (or Have) you come from old Bellario?" In Modern English we can still move the verb be to the position before the subject (as in the last example above); and, in some dialects, the verb have can also be moved in the same way (as in the next to the last example above).

Where there is an auxiliary (other than tense) in the sentence, Shakespeare forms the yes/no question in the same way we do. He moves the first auxiliary and the tense to the position in front of the subject: "May I speak with Antonio?" (I. iii. 28), and "Will you pleasure me?" (I. iii. 7). If you read the play carefully, you probably noticed that Shakespeare also used the modern form of the yes/no question. In many instances he used the word do in exactly the same way the speaker of Modern English would: "Do you know me, father?" (II. ii. 63) and "Do all men kill the things they do not love?" (IV. i. 67).

We can state Shakespeare's way of asking yes/no questions in the form of a transformation rule:

$$NP + \begin{Bmatrix} Tns + M \\ Tns + have \\ Tns + be \\ Tns + (V) \end{Bmatrix} + X \ldots \Rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} Tns + M \\ Tns + have \\ Tns + be \\ Tns + (V) \end{Bmatrix} + NP + X \ldots$$

In contrast to the above rule, Modern English transforms most yes/no question according to the following rule:

$$NP + \begin{Bmatrix} Tns + M \\ Tns + have \\ Tns + be \\ Tns \end{Bmatrix} + X \ldots \Rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} Tns + M \\ Tns + have \\ Tns + be \\ Tns \end{Bmatrix} + NP + X \ldots$$

Both rules were used in Shakespeare's time, and the same situation holds today. The important point to remember is that the rule most common in

Modern English requires the word do to carry the tense when a modal, have, or be is not present. In Modern English, we can apply Shakespeare's rule only when the main verb is be or have. When Shakespeare asked a yes/no question, he could use either rule and be equally correct.

Exercise 5.

1. Find and list at least five quotations from the play that contain an auxiliary (have, be, or modal) or the word do preceding the subject in a yes/no question.

2. Find and list at least five quotations from the play that have the lexical verb in front of the subject in a yes/no question. Try to find examples which contain verbs other than have or be.

The passive transformation. The speaker of Early Modern English transformed active sentences into passive ones in nearly the same way we do. That is, a sentence like "The boy hit the ball" becomes "The ball was hit by the boy" when the speaker applies the rule governing passive transformations:

$NP^1 + Aux + V_{tr} + NP^2 \Rightarrow NP^2 + Aux + be + en + V_{tr} + by + NP^1$

Sometimes Shakespeare used a different word in the place of by to indicate the agent (or performer of the actions). Very often the word order in the passive construction seems a bit strange to us. Other than these minor points, the passive transformation rule has undergone little change since 1600:

"I am enjoined by oath to observe three things. . ." (Arragon- II. ix. 10
"The world is still deceived with ornament." (Bassanio -III. ii. 76)
"I shall be saved by my husband." (Jessica -III. v. 17)
". . .When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven. . ." (Antonio -IV. i. 79)

The auxiliary have + en. Shakespeare's characters often use the word be in verb phrases that would require the use of have in Modern English. This difference can be seen in the following quotations from the play:

"Father, I am glad you are come." (Launcelot -II. ii. 99-100)
"What, art thou come?" (Lorenzo -II. vi. 60)
"With him is Gratiano gone along. . ." (Salerio -II. viii. 2)
"The wind is come about. . ." (Antonio II. vi. 66)

In each of these expressions, the speaker of Modern English would have used the auxiliary have + en (have come, has gone, has come). Whenever the auxiliary have occurs in the verb phrase, Modern English requires that the auxiliary or verb following have must take the past participle form, as in the expressions has broken, had walked, or has sung. But again we find that Shakespeare could use the modern form as well as the new archaic form with be:

"We have not made good preparation." (Gratiano -II. iv. 4)
"We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers." (Salerio -II. iv. 5)
"My purpose was not to have seen you here. . ." (Lorenzo -II. ii. 233)
"Your Grace hath ta'en great pains. . ." (Antonio -IV. i. 8)

In active sentences, Modern English requires that the verb or auxiliary

following be take the ing form. The en form (past participle form) does follow the auxiliary be in passive constructions like the following: "He was surprised by the letter." The above quotations from the play illustrate that Shakespeare had greater freedom in the use of certain auxiliaries. He could use either have or be to form the so-called "perfect," but today we are restricted to the use of have. In the expressions "It's gone," "It is done," and "He is gone," the old-fashioned use of be lingers on in Modern English.

Exercise 6.

Find and list at least five quotations from the play that contain the auxiliary be in expressions that would require have in Modern English. Be careful not to select ordinary passive forms, since these are identical with those in Modern English.

Negatives. Shakespeare's use of negatives (no, not, never, etc.) differs from Modern English in some constructions, but in others the patterns are identical. Like the speaker of Modern English, Shakespeare could add the word not after any modal, be, or have: "I will not choose what many men desire. . . ." (II. ix. 32), "I am not bid for love. . . ." (II. v. 15), "Yet I have not seen / So likely an ambassador of love" (II. ix. 95-6). On the other hand, Shakespeare could add the negative immediately after the main verb. The following quotations illustrate this practice:

"I know not why I am sad." (Antonio -I. i. 1)
"You look not well, Signior Antonio. . . ." (Gratiano -I. i. 76)
"Drones hive not with me. . . ." (Shylock -II. vi. 48)

Modern English requires that we use the word do in such negative statements. For example, the first quotation above would be restated somewhat like the following: "I do not know why I am sad." Shakespeare, of course, could also use the form with do, as in the statement, ". . . I do not doubt. . ." (I. i. 153). But even when the word do is used, it often does not follow the same pattern as in Modern English. For instance, Nerissa says, "Do you not remember, lady. . . ." (I. ii. 104), and Antonio comments, "I do never use it" (I. iii. 39).

Shakespeare could place the negative after the object of a verb, when that object was a pronoun. The following lines illustrate this pattern:

"If you repay me not on such a day. . . ." (Shylock -I. iii. 148)
"I know you not, young gentleman!" (Gobbo -II. ii. 64)

Here again, Modern English would require the use of do in such statements.

One final difference with respect to negatives is seen in the fact that Shakespeare was not limited in the number of negatives he could put in any one sentence. You know, of course, that current English usage does not permit the so-called "double negative" found in expressions like "I don't want nothing." An obvious exception to this rule is the affirmative use of two negatives in statements like the following: "It is not unlikely that he will go," or "It was not entirely unforeseen." In The Merchant of Venice, multiple negatives are found in the speech of educated persons. Portia, who later plays the part of a learned judge, say, "I never did repent for doing good, / Nor shall not now" (III. iv. 10-11). Other examples follow:

"Not in love neither?" (Solanio -I. i. 49)

"Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?" (Portia -I. ii. 23-4)

"So can I give no reason, nor will I not. . ." (Shylock -IV. i. 60)

We no longer have the possibility in Standard English of emphasizing a negative idea in the same way Shylock does above. When he uses three negatives in a statement containing only ten words, there is little doubt that he means "No!"

Exercise 7.

Find and list other examples of the use of negatives in the play. Next to each one that does not follow Modern English rules, write the statement as it would be said today. Perhaps you could make a rule specifying where the negative must be placed in sentences of Early Modern English.

V. Conclusions

The items discussed in this unit do not represent all the ways in which Early Modern English differs from the language we use in America today. In a subsequent unit, the pronunciation of Shakespeare's English will be discussed. Besides this, numerous other differences in vocabulary and grammar will be explored in some detail. In studying these language differences, you must always keep in mind that Shakespeare's plays are written mostly in blank verse, and this has often had an important effect upon the arrangement and choice of words.

In matters of vocabulary, you found that Shakespeare used words in new and daring ways and did not shy away from terms recently borrowed from other languages. In fact, very often the earliest recorded use in English of some borrowed words is found in the writings of Shakespeare. Since his time, many native and borrowed words have been lost from the English vocabulary, other words have been borrowed, new meanings have been added to old words, and old meanings have been lost. You discovered, for example, that Shakespeare's use of many Latin borrowings reflects meanings that are closer to the original sense of the word in Latin than the meanings we attach to it today.

You also discovered that the grammar of Shakespeare's English, although different from ours in many ways, is sufficiently like the grammar of Modern English that you can read his plays with little difficulty. You found, among other things, that (1) his use of negatives is not exactly like our own, (2) the passive transformation of Early Modern English is nearly the same one that is used today, (3) Shakespeare often used be + en where we would now use have + en. (4) he could move any main verb to a position in front of the subject when asking a yes/no question, (5) Shakespeare did not commonly use be + ing in the verb phrase, and (6) several of the pronoun and verb forms that he used are no longer used today.

Although we have stressed certain "freedoms" that Shakespeare enjoyed in using his English, we could no doubt find similar "freedoms" in our own English if we made a closer examination of the two varieties. Shakespeare

creativity in the use of language can hardly be attributed to the nature of the system itself; more likely, the cause was a combination of his own talent and the exuberance of English life under the rule of Queen Elizabeth.

VI. Additional Readings

You will find a great deal of additional information about the language of Shakespeare in the following books:

1. Holzknecht, Karl J. The Backgrounds of Shakespeare's Plays. New York, 1950. Chapter 8, "Shakespeare's English," contains abundant material on the vocabulary of 1600 and some information on Shakespeare's pronunciation.

2. Hulme, Hilda M. Explorations in Shakespeare's Lnaguage. The University Press, Aberdeen, Great Britain, 1963. Chapters V and VI, "'Latin' Reference in Shakespearean English" and "Spelling Habits and Pronunciation Variants," are especially good.

VII. Additional Assignments

Since you probably have spent a good deal of time studying the literary merits of The Merchant of Venice, no extensive writing assignments seem necessary. However, you might enjoy testing your knowledge of Shakespeare's vocabulary and grammar by translating into Modern American English a scene (or part of a scene) from the play. Be very careful to look up any words, especially those which have been borrowed from Latin, to determine whether they are used in the same sense that we use them today.

Another rewarding task might be the building of a Shakespeare lexicon, a list of words that Shakespeare used in unusually interesting ways. Each entry could include information like the following: (1) the word itself, (2) the quotation in which it is found, (3) the probable meaning intended by Shakespeare, (4) present-day meaning(s), and (5) any other pertinent information.